

Introduction of Memory Link Worker Role within General Surgery

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Introduction:

Patients living with dementia are more likely to experience delirium and adverse outcomes when admitted to hospital (Dementia UK, 2022). The General Surgery directorate at Cardiff and Vale University Health Board secured funding for a Memory Link Worker (MLW) in the emergency stream. The aim of the MLW is to improve the hospital experience for patients living with cognitive impairment or anyone experiencing delirium. The MLW should also increase awareness and completion rates of "Read About Me" (RAM).

Method:

Eligible patients are identified by ward staff or the Perioperative care of Older People undergoing Surgery (POPS) team and referred. The MLW reviews patients, offers activities, contacts families/ carers and completes the RAM. We used dementia care mapping (DCM), an observational tool to objectively measure the impact of interventions on patient wellbeing and improve care for people living with dementia. Patient, relative and staff feedback was collected via a short survey.

Results:

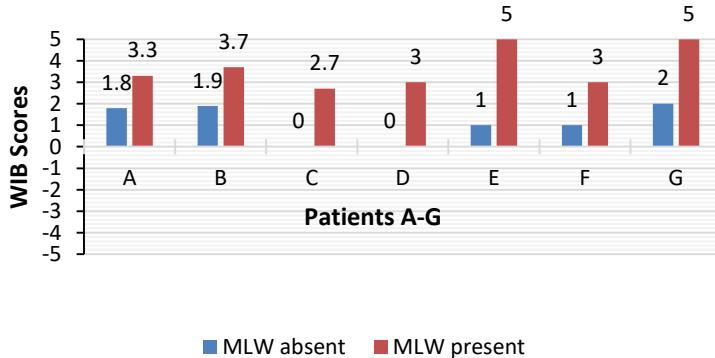
- During the first 2 years the MLW has seen 107 and 141 patients respectively. DCM demonstrated a positive impact on patient well-being, mood and engagement. Very few patients were able to self-entertain in the absence of the MLW and those that did were using tools supplied by the MLW. A small survey of patients and relatives (n=9) found MLW support to be 'extremely helpful' and if readmitted would want MLW support again. A larger staff survey (n=52) showed most felt their ward had benefitted from MLW input, and felt that other wards with cognitively impaired patients would benefit from similar, as well as showing good awareness of the role.

Dementia Care Mapping

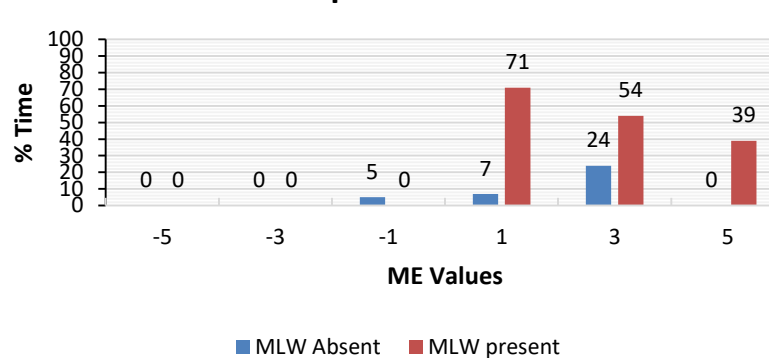
Individual well being:

Mood and Engagement:

Individual WIB Score



Group WIB Profile



Patient/ Relative/ Staff Feedback:

"(MLW) is an essential member of the support team"
-Patient

"(MLW) helped my husband move from a dark place to a positive way of thinking"
-Relative

"(MLW) is an asset to hospital"
-Patient

"(MLW) has lifted spirits and moral of patients...given (patients) the attention nursing staff simply don't have time to provide"
-Staff

References:

Dementia UK (2022). *Delirium (sudden confusion)*. [online] Dementia UK..
DCM data provided by CAVUHB DCM Team, July 2022.

Conclusions:

The DCM process aligned with survey findings of a positive impact of the MLW role on patient experiences in secondary care setting.

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